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Anyone attempting to appraise the career of William Brantley Aycock faces a problem which is no less serious for being stated ungrammatically: There are so many of him.

Popular leader of his high school class despite his selection of Domestic Science as one of his courses; at the college level, president of the student body at North Carolina State; recipient of an M.A. in History from U.N.C. at Chapel Hill; fine school teacher who, in addition to fulfilling his classroom duties, successfully coached sports he never played; efficient official of the National Youth Administration; called early into active military service as holder of a commission earned in ROTC, became supervisor of the training of many of the Japanese-American troops who fought so well in Italy and, later, commander of a battalion as it fought equally well in the latter part of the Battle of the Bulge and spearheaded Patton's Army as it attacked into Germany; as a mature law student, already a husband and father, was first in academic standing and editor in chief of the Law Review in a brilliant class composed largely of combat veterans; welcomed to the law faculty immediately upon his midyear graduation, became a highly respected teacher of those who had been his fellow students; selected by Dr. Frank Graham as Personal Assistant on the U.N. Mission to India and Pakistan, serving also as an aide to the senior American military officer on the Mission—General Jacob L. Devers, who had commanded an Army in Europe during the final months of the war; coauthor of a definitive treatise on Military Law under the Uniform Code; transferred to the Reserve of the Judge Advocate General's Corps as a Lieutenant Colonel, a deficiency in length of legal experience being waived at the instance of the Judge Advocate General himself; highly regarded Visiting Professor at the Law Schools of the University of Texas and the University of Virginia; having already served upon occasion as Acting Dean, would have become Dean of the Law School in 1959 except for the fact that in 1957, after less than ten years on the faculty, he was side-tracked into the Chancellorship—an office he truly graced but never intended to keep for the rest of his active career; in 1964, by his own choice, back on the law faculty, thereafter selected again and again by the students as outstanding in the classroom and recognized by his colleagues as an outstanding scholar, producing most valuable articles in the Law Review on North Carolina Water Law, on Federal Jurisdiction, and on North Carolina Antitrust and Unfair Trade Practice Law.

He has received honors—*e.g.*, three LL.D.s (Wake Forest, Atlantic Chris-

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tian, and Duke), a Kenan Professorship, the University's Thomas Jefferson Award, and, most recently, the North Carolina Bar Association's Liberty Bell Award in recognition of community service that has strengthened the American legal system. These honors reflect, but are not part of the basic framework of his careers.

To engage in his diverse pursuits, even at a level of mediocrity barely above the disastrous, would require considerable versatility. To engage in them at Aycock's consistently high level of competence requires versatility with a solid touch of genius. With most lawyers I believe that a sound legal education fosters versatility better than any other formal training, but this could not have produced the military competence Aycock manifested before entering law school. Further, the existence of interrelationships between some of these pursuits is no guarantee of equal competence in each. A good legal scholar is not necessarily a good law school administrator, and a good law school administrator is not necessarily a good administrator of the overall responsibilities of a Chancellor. But Aycock, without exception, has demonstrated extraordinary competence in all of his varied careers.

His success in no way depends upon histrionic ability. And he has never pushed for higher levels of responsibility. Indeed, his brilliance may actually be unsuspected by those not in close contact with him. His arrival at places of greater responsibility has been something of a gravitational process, with the force furnished by those who have had such contacts.

Though his diverse careers have demanded other qualities of varying kinds, there are identifiable qualities which have been his strengths across the board.

He works. For years his workday has begun long before most people are out of bed. (I have never regarded myself as a sluggard, but in the years we had adjoining faculty offices, I never managed to beat him to the premises.) As a law student he once walked miles through deep snow only to find, upon reaching the Law School, that few fellow students and fewer faculty had been as conscientious. His self-discipline has been life long and awesome, but he has never tried to make invidious examples of those not able or willing to hold themselves so rigidly in line.

He has work priorities. He does many things well, but not all at one time, and he does not gallop off in all directions. When he is teaching, his first priority is preparation for the classroom, followed by research, writing, and faculty and committee work. Other assignments are taken sparingly and only when he can assure himself that his priorities will not suffer. He left the organized Army Reserve, in which he had been promoted to Colonel, when he found that he could not do it justice without slighting his priorities as Chancellor.

He thinks. This, which with some people is potentially as dangerous as rewarding, is with Aycock a channeled process which depends little upon abstractions, but rather, since 1948, applies his legally developed power of analysis to all the relevant facts he can ascertain. The process seldom leads to a single, inescapable conclusion. It is more likely to develop alternatives or options, with conclusions as to which is better, how much it is better, and why. Even when,

during my Deanship, he was still the youngest member of the law faculty, I consistently sought his advice and always found it to be excellent. More than anyone else I have known he has the ability, from observation and analysis of known facts, however scanty, to avoid surprise, foresee possible future developments and be prepared to deal with them.

He is loaded with common sense. I confess that I have never had any firm idea of what other kinds of sense there may be; but if there is a distinction, he has an exceptional amount of the laudably common variety. What he reads or hears is automatically subject to the scrutiny of common sense; and if it fails that test he treats it with wary skepticism however sacrosanct its source.

He has a solid base in his family. He loved and honored his parents. The mutual love, help, and loyalty of Bill and Grace, his wife, are strong, enviable ties; and there is mutual love and respect between him and his children. He knows who he is, what he is, and where he is. He has perceived no reason for indulging in the fashionable modern pastime of searching for one's identity.

He has integrity. After Aycock returned from India, General Devers, on his own motion, wrote the Adjutant General:

> Aycock is a young lawyer whose good judgment and common sense have already established his reputation in his specialty . . . . I was impressed with his ability to go right to the core of any problem we were tackling out there, and come up with the right recommendation . . . . His capacity for working eighteen hours a day, if pressed, with the heat well over 100 degrees and the humidity in the 80's, was an inspiration to all of us. He was especially helpful to me, because he had been in combat during the war, and had a very realistic understanding of my particular phase of the mission.
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> Better than anything else, I liked Aycock's great personal integrity. At times he disagreed completely with Doctor Graham's or my views, and he always had the honesty to say so. An officer with less principle would not have had his courage.

The basic judgments about Aycock in that letter, written more than thirty-four years ago by a General on the same wartime command level as Bradley and Patton, are equally valid today. Also still relevant are sentiments incorporated in a resolution adopted by the law faculty when he became Chancellor in 1957:

> Since February of 1948, when he joined this faculty, he has been a warm friend to faculty members, students and alumni alike. He has been a scholar and author of distinction, a fine classroom teacher, a tireless worker for the welfare of the School and the University, and a wise counsellor in discussion of the School's problems. The quality of his professional reputation is attested by the offers he has received—and declined—from three fine law schools.

Character, integrity, hard work, common sense, uncommon intelligence, self-discipline, exacting standards for himself, devotion to School and University, still clearly and solidly abide. After he dismisses his last class, attends his last faculty meeting, and grades his last exams, others will teach his courses and sit in his faculty seat, but in the sense of equivalency, he will not be replaced.

The great ones are fashioned in unique molds; and William Brantley Aycock is one of the greatest.